



TRI-STATE
MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS
ASSOCIATION

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February 2023 Newsletter

Offering support, care, and hope...*right here at home!*

The mission of the Tri-State Multiple Sclerosis Association is to enhance the quality of life for individuals living with MS & their families in Southern IN, Southern IL & Western KY

Prioritize Human Connection in the New Year

By Dr. John Delony

We live in a crazy world where we get into heated debates with strangers on the internet and show we like stuff by pressing tiny digital hearts. Who came up with this weirdness? And as we have more and more digital interactions, the data shows we're losing actual human connection. A report by Harvard suggests that about 36% of Americans (including 51% of mothers with small children and 61% of young adults) experience “serious loneliness.”¹

And even though we tend to see independence as a strength, the stress of disconnection contributes to a ton of issues, including substance abuse, anxiety, depression and heart disease.² Those are some pretty high stakes—which is why we need to do what we can to change those statistics. Here's what we all need to know about human connection and how to achieve it.

What Is Human Connection?

Human connection is what happens when two or more people choose to engage in vulnerable interactions where each person is heard, seen, known and valued. You're connecting with others if you feel better about yourself, or the world, after you've been with them. At the same time, connection is a risk because people may accept you, challenge you, love you, or call you out.

For your closest relationships, connection is being fully known and fully loved. Sadly, most of us believe we have to choose between being known and loved. We hide and edit parts of ourselves that have gotten us hurt before. We live in the shallow end of our relationships, afraid to go deep because of the potential consequences. But real connection is like scuba diving. You can't stay on the surface if you want to have rich and meaningful relationships.

What Human Connection Isn't

Close and intimate relationships might sound like rainbows and butterflies, but they're actually super messy. Sooner or later, you're going to screw them up. You're going to be disappointed. But a messy relationship doesn't always mean you're doing something wrong.

Human connection isn't digital. Snapchat, TikTok, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and any other platform I'm not cool enough to know about *do not foster human connection*. They can act as a starting point or provide information updates, but they don't offer the depth and excitement of true connection.

Human connection is not proximity, either. You can be close to someone physically but not be *connected* to them. If you're married, you know what it's like to be in the middle of a fight or struggling to get on the same page: That six-inch space between you in bed can feel like 1,000 miles. Connection needs proximity, but proximity does not guarantee connection.

How to Find Real Human Connection

Learning to connect with people is a lifelong adventure. It's going to look different for everyone, but here are a few practices to help steer you in the right direction:

Put your screens down - Technology is often counterproductive to connection. As much as possible, choose movement and/or conversation with people over screen time. A new rule in my home is this: When someone speaks, all phones go down and all eyes go to the person. I want everyone in my home to feel more valuable than a flashy metal box.

Schedule time with people - Quality time comes from quantity time. If you want connection, make time for it. Turn off Netflix and call a buddy to invite them over. Stop spending your nights and weekends checking in on work, and have dinner out together or take your kids to a park. *Make time* for people.

Look people in the eye - This one seems pretty basic, but it makes an incredible difference in how connected you feel to someone. Eye contact is a simple and powerful way to create connection. And while you're looking people in the eye, put down your screens and take out your headphones or earbuds. Physically demonstrate that you're connected.

Ask questions, then listen - When people are talking to you, pay attention. Listen. Focus on what they're saying. Ask follow-up questions. Dig deeper. Show people you care by practicing the art of conversation.

Be generous with forgiveness and grace - Relationships are risky, and they are messy. We live in a cancel culture that is constantly putting people on trial, scrutinizing their every move, and giving them death sentences for their first offense. Be different. Forgive. Be hospitable. Extend grace, compassion and forgiveness to people, just like you'd want someone to do for you. Redemption is the best part of every good story.

Find groups that matter to you and be an involved member - Connection should first happen in our most intimate circles with friends and family. But eventually, we should all consider how we can be an engaged member of the larger community around us. From church to school to nonprofits to local politics, follow the thread of interest that connects you to a group of people you care about. Be present. Be engaged. Let your walls down. Remember, connection is a choice. Proximity alone won't do the trick.

If you remember nothing else from this article, please hear me on this: You are worthy of having deep, life-giving relationships. I'm talking about the kind of relationships that keep you up past midnight in deep discussion, make you laugh so hard you pee your pants, and push you to take risks and grow and change.

Do whatever it takes to be well and learn new skills. Do what it takes to heal. If that means forgiving people, do it. If it means forgiving yourself, do it. If it means working with a therapist, *do it*. You deserve to be happy, healthy and whole. And there's no better time to make this happen than right now.



* **Dr. John Delony** is a mental health expert with PhDs in Counselor Education & Supervision and Higher Education Administration from Texas Tech University. Prior to joining Ramsey Solutions in 2020, John worked as a senior leader, professor and researcher at multiple universities. He also spent two decades in crisis response, walking with people through severe trauma. Now as a Ramsey Personality, he teaches on relationships and emotional wellness. Follow John on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#) or online at www.johndelony.com.

NEW YORK, Dec. 28, 2022 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- TG Therapeutics, Inc., today announced the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved BRIUMVI™ (ublituximab-xiyy), for the treatment of relapsing forms of multiple sclerosis (RMS), to include clinically isolated syndrome, relapsing-remitting disease, and active secondary progressive disease, in adults.

Approval was granted for this indication based on data from the ULTIMATE I & II Phase 3 trials, which demonstrated superiority over teriflunomide in significantly reducing the annualized relapse rate (ARR, the primary endpoint), the number of T1 Gd-enhancing lesions and the number of new or enlarging T2 lesions. Results from the ULTIMATE I & II trials were recently published in August 2022 in *The New England Journal of Medicine*.

BRIUMVI is the first and only anti-CD20 monoclonal antibody approved for patients with RMS that can be administered in a one-hour infusion following the starting dose. The administration schedule of BRIUMVI consists of a day one infusion of 150mg administered in four hours, a day 15 infusion of 450mg administered in one hour, followed by 450mg infusions every 24 weeks administered in one hour.

Michael S. Weiss, the Company's Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, stated, "Today's FDA approval marks an exciting day for everyone touched by MS and everyone that has worked on the development of BRIUMVI. We believe in the importance of treatment alternatives for patients and believe the profile of BRIUMVI offers unique attributes to patients and physicians alike. We have built a strong commercial team with deep knowledge of the MS landscape and look forward to launching in Q1 2023." Mr. Weiss continued, "We want to thank the patients and their families, the clinical investigators and their teams, and our advisors for their support and participation in our trials, and for helping us get to this point. We remain committed to the patients we serve and providing seamless access to BRIUMVI once launched."

Lawrence Steinman, MD, Zimmermann Professor of Neurology & Neurological Sciences, and Pediatrics at Stanford University, stated, "Over the past several years we have seen a dramatic shift in the MS treatment landscape towards the use of B-cell therapy, which has shown to be highly effective in reducing relapses in patients. The outcome of the ULTIMATE I & II trials evaluating ublituximab, a novel targeted anti-CD20 agent designed for efficient B-cell depletion that supported this approval, represents an important milestone in the history of MS research as the first Phase 3 study of an anti-CD20 monoclonal antibody in patients with relapsing MS to produce an annualized relapse rate of less than 0.10, which translates to less than 1 relapse in 10 years. This approval is great news for patients living with MS and provides an appealing treatment alternative that can be administered in a one-hour infusion twice-a-year following the starting dose, which I believe is an added benefit to patients."

June Halper, MSN, APN-C, MSCN, FAAN, Chief Executive Officer of the Consortium of Multiple Sclerosis Centers has stated, "The approval of BRIUMVI is wonderful news. MS is most frequently diagnosed during the prime of a person's life when they are just starting a career or beginning a family. The availability of anti-CD20s has launched a new era of high efficacy therapies for multiple sclerosis. The addition of BRIUMVI has added to the hope chest of patients, families, and the MS professional community. As a multi-disciplinary organization centered on the needs of those with MS, we appreciate the increasing array of treatment choices. Congratulations to TG Therapeutics from the CMSC and our leadership."

ABOUT THE ULTIMATE I & II PHASE 3 TRIALS

ULTIMATE I & II are two randomized, double-blind, double-dummy, parallel group, active comparator-controlled clinical trials of identical design, in patients with RMS treated for 96 weeks.

Patients were randomized to receive either BRIUMVI, given as an IV infusion of 150 mg administered in four hours, 450 mg two weeks after the first infusion administered in one hour, and 450 mg every 24 weeks administered in one hour, with oral placebo administered daily; or teriflunomide, the active comparator, given orally as a 14 mg daily dose with IV placebo administered on the same schedule as BRIUMVI. Both studies enrolled patients who had experienced at least one relapse in the previous year, two relapses in the previous two years, or had the presence of a T1 gadolinium (Gd)-enhancing lesion in the previous year. Patients were also required to have an Expanded Disability Status Scale (EDSS) score from 0 to 5.5 at baseline. The ULTIMATE I & II trials enrolled a total of 1,094 patients with RMS across 10 countries. These trials were led by Lawrence Steinman, MD, Zimmermann Professor of Neurology & Neurological Sciences, and Pediatrics at Stanford University. Additional information on these clinical trials can be found at www.clinicaltrials.gov (NCT03277261; NCT03277248).



Susan's Highlights - February Webinars:

Can Do MS - How To Optimize Your Energy

February 1st, 2023 @ 7:00pm - 8:00pm US/Eastern

Fatigue taking the fun out of life? Join this webinar to learn our top tips for making the most of your energy! We'll cover strategies to increase your energy, tactics to simplify daily tasks, and ideas for how you can explain MS fatigue to other people who just don't get it.

REGISTER NOW at www.cando-ms.org

From the Multiple Sclerosis Foundation Register at: www.msfocus.org

What to do about Depression and Anxiety - February 06, 2023 - Join us at 6:30 p.m. Eastern, 5:30 p.m. Central, 4:30 p.m. Mountain, 3:30 p.m. Pacific, on Feb. 6, for "What to do about Depression and Anxiety," presented by Frederick W. Foley.

Dietary Research: Updates and New Opportunities - February 09, 2023 - Join us at 5 p.m. Eastern, 4 p.m. Central, 3 p.m. Mountain, 2 p.m. Pacific, on Feb. 9, for *Dietary Research: Updates and New Opportunities*, presented by Dr. Terry Wahls.

Ask the MS Expert-February 14, 2023 - Join us at 4:30 p.m. Eastern, 3:30 p.m. Central, 2:30 p.m. Mountain, 1:30 p.m. Pacific, on Feb. 14, for *Ask the MS Expert*, presented by Dr. Ben Thrower.

Black History Month Series 1. Voices of MS: Our Experiences as Black Men

February 17, 2023 - Join us at 7 p.m. Eastern, 6 p.m. Central, 5 p.m. Mountain, 4 p.m. Pacific, on Feb. 17, for *Black History Month Series 1. Voices of MS: Our Experiences as Black Men*, presented by Damian Washington, Tim Carr, and Erik Nelson.

Black History Month Series, 2. Voices of MS: Our Experiences as Research Participants

February 23, 2023 - Join us at 7 p.m. Eastern, 6 p.m. Central, 5 p.m. Mountain, 4 p.m. Pacific, on Feb. 23, for "Black History Month Series, 2. Voices of MS: Our Experiences as Research Participants", presented by Veronica Daniels Lewis, Delisa French, and Dimika Cavalier.

From the Rocky Mountain MS Center - MS 101 online class -MS 101 is a free class for newly-diagnosed MS patients, their family members, and support partners.

When and where: Online/ Register on their website. www.mscenter.org

Date and Time- Tue, February 7, 2023, 5:30 PM-7:30 PM MST.

There are 2 other classes in February: Feb. 17th and Feb. 28th.